

ingly. It appears in the minutes of the House of Delegates printed in this number of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE (on page 80).

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Proposed Amendment to the Constitution. A proposed amendment to the constitution, providing for safeguards against future undue expenditures, was the result of a recent sad experience in trying to fulfill instructions given at the Riverside and Los Angeles sessions of the House of Delegates and drawing on the State Association's funds to make the medical costs survey—with no top-limit on the amount of money so to be expended; and this proposed amendment* will come before the House of Delegates at the annual session in Del Monte, 1937.

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All Features of the Coronado Session Were Up to Standard.—These comments on some of the happenings at Coronado are made especially for readers who do not wish to go through the maze of official proceedings as chronicled in the stenographic minutes.

The scientific exhibits were fully up to standard, and the commercial displays likewise happily placed. The near-by San Diego Fair, with its admirable Hall of Medical Science, provided additional social features. The dinner to President Peers saw the spacious dining rooms of the Hotel del Coronado filled to overflowing; and roomy rotundas and porches of the famous caravansary gave all present opportunities without end to meet old and new friends.

In conclusion, it may again be confidently stated that the Coronado annual session was, in its series of meetings of real inspirational value, in every way a great success; and those who were not in attendance may now turn their thoughts to the possibility of participating in next year's session at the Hotel Del Monte in Monterey County.

SUMMER COMMITTEE WORK IN COUNTY SOCIETIES—PREPARATION OF FALL PROGRAMS: COLLECTION OF COUNTY SOCIETY HISTORICAL MATERIAL

Summer Vacation Periods May Be Utilized Advantageously by Committees.—Most county societies discontinue regular meetings during the summer vacation months, the members coming back with increased zest and interest when the scientific meetings resume in the fall. Experience has shown such arrangement to be desirable, but experience has also demonstrated that county society committees, whose members may occasionally meet with one another during these breathing spells, can well plan work sure to enhance the society proceedings when, in the succeeding months, their reports will be submitted.

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Program Committee Should Plan Its Work to Cover the Year.—One such committee whose members have a very definite responsibility

* The amendment has a place in the minutes of the House of Delegates (page 92).

is that "on program." A county society profits greatly if the committee on program plans a co-ordinated group of papers, assigning authors for the topics, so that certain themes of general or special local interest are developed in rounded and instructive form. Of importance, also, is the presentation of patients and specimens in such wise as to elicit stimulating debate; which again brings to mind the advantages to be derived in discussion, when authors submit, in advance of the meetings, their papers to two or three colleagues, with a request that they be prepared to discuss certain phases when called upon by the presiding officer. Hastily gotten together or impromptu medical programs occasionally do measure up to a good standard; but, in the long run, that society has the more valuable meetings whose program committee properly fulfills its functions by carefully planning in advance.

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The Sadly-Neglected Historical Studies of Our State and County Associations.—Another committee which every county society should appoint is the Committee on History, the society secretary being an ex officio member thereof, because he is supposed to be in possession of the organization's records. It is a sad reflection on most of the county units, and even upon the state organization, that so little concerted and result-producing effort should have been made in the past to gather together old record books and other memorabilia which could be utilized as a basis for one or more historical papers for the local societies; copies always being sent, of course, to the State Association for preservation in its own archives. During the coming year the State Association Committee on History aims to start a consistent campaign that will promote the furtherance of historical investigation. The presidents of county societies which do not have history committees are requested to appoint those, or to ask for volunteers, who will start this work during these summer months. If nothing more were done than to find out whether a complete set of secretary records are still in existence, and where they may be found, that in itself would really be something. As a further suggestion, it might be wise to gather together all old record books of county societies and forward them to the State Association offices at San Francisco, where they could be kept for safe keeping and reference, as needed. If some such plan is not followed, then, as in the past, it will become only a matter of time when a local secretary may forget to turn over the old record books, and so allow them to be forgotten and irretrievably lost.

Our State Association was founded in 1856, but, as with so much else in the annals of California, the written records of early days in our possession are practically *nil*. Another instance of our lack of thought for the cultural-historical may be found in the interesting biographical notes, for the first time published in CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, in its May and June issues, concerning Dr. Joseph P. Widney, who in 1871

founded the Los Angeles County Medical Association, and is still active at the age of 95, in literary and other work. His part in the establishing of the largest county medical society west of the Mississippi, as well as his living presence was practically unknown to a majority of members of that large and important county unit. We must all agree that such indifference to the historical backgrounds of state and county organizations, which for almost a century have carried on the battle for proper standards of medical practice and public health in California, does not redound to our credit. Before it is altogether too late, then, let us set about, in earnest fashion, to take up this work, lest those who will follow in our footsteps may cast reproach upon our memories.

DEATH OF DR. CAMPBELL P. HOWARD, GUEST SPEAKER AT THE CORONADO ANNUAL SESSION

Among the distinguished guest speakers at the Coronado annual session was Dr. Campbell Palmer Howard, for years professor of medicine in the McGill University Faculty of Medicine, at Montreal, Canada, who presided at the clinical-pathological conference on Tuesday, May 26, and in such a manner as to elicit the admiration of all who were present to profit from his inspiring leadership. Having been so invited by the California Medical Association to come afar to this year's session and assume this duty, he met his obligation cheerfully, although sufficiently suffering physically at the time to keep to his bed, in the hotel, until almost the hour of his clinic.

Members of the California Medical Association, therefore, will learn with the greatest regret of Doctor Howard's sudden death several days later (on June 3), while on a visit with an old friend and colleague.*

The sympathy of the California Medical Association is here expressed to the members of Doctor Howard's family and to his colleagues on the faculty of McGill University.

PRACTICE OF ANESTHESIA: CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT DENIES APPLICATION FOR REHEARING

On page 461 of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE for June, reference was made to the opinion handed down by five of the California Supreme Court justices, permitting, in essence, an unlicensed person to administer an anesthetic to some other person, and so to practice medicine, provided that the giving of the anesthetic "was and is done under the immediate direction and supervision of the operating surgeon and his assistants." A footnote to our comments stated that the Council of the California Medical Association had instructed its legal counsel, Mr. Hart-

ley Peart, to make application to the Supreme Court for a rehearing. This was done, a brief being prepared in regular form. Lack of space prevents its publication in the current issue, but in a subsequent number we may again refer to the subject. On June 15, the application for a rehearing was denied by the Supreme Court, only Justices Langdon and Curtis voting in the affirmative. This means that the original opinion of Justices Waste, Conrey, Curtis, Langdon and Thompson of the California Supreme Court, sitting in banc on May 18 last, is now law.*

Other State Association and Component County Society News.—Additional news concerning the activities and work of the California Medical Association and its component county medical societies is printed in this issue, commencing on page 69.

EDITORIAL COMMENT†

THE PHYSICIAN AND THE DRUG TRADE

When Edison, Bell, Marconi, DeForrest, and the other great wizards of modern invention were developing their marvelous ideas, caution marked their efforts at every step, and proven safety and efficiency were their guiding principles. No incomplete, half-baked products were prematurely exploited for the sake of possible profit. Exactness and practical utility were accepted as basic requirements of scientific procedure.

Not so with many manufacturers of new drugs. Here, since nothing more than the unimportant issues of life and death are at stake, commercialism instead of proved merit seems to dominate the situation.

The question may be seriously raised whether present-day medicine is truly progressing, unless "progress" is used in its generic sense as meaning simply movement, which may be backward as well as forward.

Is medicine really progressing in the direction of accuracy, definite improvement in the remedial agencies employed? A glance at the record of the past few years would seem to make it very clear that the matter is at least a debatable one. And this without special emphasis upon the professional or economic phases of the subject. The trend along these latter lines is certainly not toward forward progress—even the confirmed optimist would admit as much. And, viewing the question dispassionately, a similar possible conclusion suggests itself with reference to the administration of drugs. Of course, we all recognize

* The full opinion was printed on page 537 of our June issue.

† This department of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE presents editorial comment by contributing members on items of medical progress, science and practice, and on topics from recent medical books or journals. An invitation is extended to all members of the California and Nevada Medical Associations to submit brief editorial discussions suitable for publication in this department. No presentation should be over five hundred words in length.

* CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE for June reprinted, on page 534, a brief newspaper item about his death. In this issue the proper obituary notice will be found on page 102.